

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. An accounting management apparatus that manages accounting with respect to image formation by an image formation device, which uses a recording agent from a recording agent cartridge having a storage element to form an image including letters and characters on a medium like paper, said accounting management apparatus comprising:

an information acquisition module that acquires accounting information which is stored in the storage element of said recording agent cartridge, the accounting information including cartridge information with regard to said recording agent cartridge and image formation information with regard to image formation carried out by said image formation device with the recording agent from said recording agent cartridge; and

a charge computation module that computes a charge, based on the acquired cartridge information and image formation information.

2. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the cartridge information includes reuse information regarding reuse of a main body and components of said recording agent cartridge, and

said charge computation module computes the charge, based on the reuse information.

3. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with  
5 claim 2, wherein said charge computation module computes the charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in frequency of reuse with regard to the main body of said recording agent cartridge.

10 4. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with claim 2, wherein said charge computation module computes the charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in number of reused components among all the components of said recording agent cartridge.

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5. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the image formation information includes a numerical quantity of image formation, and

said charge computation module computes the charge in such  
20 a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in numerical quantity of image formation.

6. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with

claim 1, wherein said information acquisition module acquires the image formation information from the storage element of said recording agent cartridge.

5           7. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with claim 6, said accounting management apparatus further comprising:

          a connector module that is connectable with the storage element of said recording agent cartridge,

10           wherein said information acquisition module acquires information used for accounting from the storage element of said recording agent cartridge connecting with said connector module.

          8. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with  
15 claim 1, wherein said information acquisition module acquires the cartridge information and the image formation information, which are stored in the storage element of said recording agent cartridge attached to said image formation device, from said  
image formation device connecting with said accounting  
20 management apparatus via a communication line.

          9. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with claim 8, wherein multiple recording agent cartridges are attached

to said image formation device, and

said charge computation module computes the charge, based on multiple pieces of the cartridge information acquired from respective storage elements of said multiple recording agent  
5 cartridges attached to said image formation device.

10. An accounting process method that manages accounting with respect to image formation by an image formation device, which uses a recording agent from a recording agent cartridge  
10 having a storage element to form an image including letters and characters on a medium like paper, said accounting process method comprising the steps of:

(a) acquiring accounting information, the accounting information including cartridge information with regard to said  
15 recording agent cartridge, which is stored in the storage element of said recording agent cartridge, and image formation information with regard to image formation carried out by said image formation device with the recording agent from said recording agent cartridge; and

20 (b) computing a charge, based on the acquired cartridge information and image formation information.

11. An accounting process method in accordance with claim

10, wherein the cartridge information includes reuse information regarding reuse of a main body and components of said recording agent cartridge, and

said step(b) computes the charge, based on the reuse  
5 information.

12. An accounting process method in accordance with claim 11, wherein said step(b) computes the charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in frequency of reuse  
10 with regard to the main body of said recording agent cartridge.

13. An accounting process method in accordance with claim 11, wherein said step(b) computes the charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in number of reused  
15 components among all the components of said recording agent cartridge.

14. An accounting process method in accordance with claim 10, wherein the image formation information includes a numerical  
20 quantity of image formation, and

said step(b) computes the charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in numerical quantity of image formation.

15. An accounting process method in accordance with claim 10, wherein said step(a) acquires the image formation information from the storage element of said recording agent cartridge.

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16. An accounting process method in accordance with claim 10, wherein said step(a) acquires the cartridge information and the image formation information, which are stored in the storage element of said recording agent cartridge attached to said image formation device, from said image formation device connecting with said accounting management apparatus via a communication line.

17. An accounting process method in accordance with claim 15 16, wherein multiple recording agent cartridges are attached to said image formation device, and

said step(b) computes the charge, based on multiple pieces of the cartridge information acquired from respective storage elements of said multiple recording agent cartridges attached to said image formation device.

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